

ITEM:	10
SUBJECT:	Regulation of Small Wineries in Foothill Counties - A Status Report
DISCUSSION:	<p>Staff have recently become aware of a large number of wineries within the foothill counties of El Dorado, Amador, and Calaveras. Only two of approximately 45 wineries are currently covered under WDRs. Winery wastewater has the potential to adversely impact water quality as it can contain elevated salts (TDS over 2,000 mg/l), BOD (over 12,000 mg/l) and total nitrogen (over 75 mg/l). The pH can range from 2 to 11. The wastewater concentrations and flow volume vary throughout the year, as the wineries conduct different operations at different times.</p> <p>It appears that the majority of the small wineries discharge their wastewater to septic tanks and then subsurface leachfields. Little or no pre-treatment occurs before the discharge. Because many foothill areas contain perched groundwater, there is the potential for groundwater to be degraded due to this disposal method.</p> <p>Staff recently prepared tentative WDRs for a small winery in Amador County. We received many comments questioning the need for WDRs, as well as concerns about the individual economic impact of effluent and groundwater monitoring, and the cumulative economic impact of regulating this industry. We were also questioned as to our plans for regulating the other currently un-regulated foothill wineries.</p> <p>Staff will present information regarding winery waste characteristics, current waste disposal practices, and options for regulation. We will also discuss how other Regional Boards regulate the wastewater produced by wineries. Staff will ask the Board for guidance on this issue.</p>
RECOMMENDATION:	Information item only.

Mgmt. Review _____

Legal Review _____